(b) the steps taken for harnessing the Chromite resources on commercial lines during the last three years; and

(c) the revenue collected by Government from the same during the said period?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COAL AND MINES (SHRI RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD): (a) Chromite ore is available in the States of Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Manipur, Orissa and Tamil Nadu. Orissa continues to be the major producing State of Chromite.

(b) Several Policy measures are already in force to facilitate harnessing chromite resources on commercial lines. As per the existing policy, private investment (both domestic and foreign) has been permitted for the exploration and exploitation of chromite ore. The State Governments have been delegated powers to grant mineral concessions even for areas which are not compact or contiguous. There is no need for any reference to be made to Central Government for renewal of prospecting license/mining lease. Several tax concessions are available for chrome ore industry.

(c) Revenue is collected by the State Governments.

Exploration of Diamonds in Hirakud area of Orissa

1062. SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA: Will the Minister of COAL AND MINES be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the ancient diamonds mines are existing in Hirakud area of Orissa and whether Government have carried out necessary survey in this regard;

(b) whether Government has explored the possibility for commercial mining in the area; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COAL AND MINES (SHRI RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD): (a) to (c) Government has so far not carried out any survey regarding diamond bearing:areas in Hirakud (Orissa), as there is no reliable information on its availability.